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INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002855

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGERFO

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SUBJECT: MGGZ01 - ISRAELI GAZA INCURSION - JERUSALEM JULY 9
SITREP

REF: A. GMP20060708757003 GAZA RAMATTAN NEWS AGENCY 8

JUL 06

1B. GMP20060708748006 (INTERNET) HAMAS-AFFILIATED
PALESTINIAN INFORMATION CENTER WWW -
TEXT IN ENGLISH 8 JUL 06
1C. GMP20060708748004 WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP
PALESTINIAN INFORMATION CENTER - REPORT
IN ENGLISH 8 JUL 06

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

11. (C) IDF forces appear to have withdrawn from parts of the northern Gaza strip, but remain present in the central and southern sections. An explosion near Gaza City on July 8 that killed a mother and two of her children has attracted wide media attention. Prime Minister Hanniyyah released a 5-point & initiative8 on July 8 that, inter alia, calls for a return to calm, IDF withdrawal from Gaza, release of detained Hamas officials, and resumption of negotiations over kidnapped IDF corporal Galid Shalit; media reports indicate that the GOI has rejected anything short of Shalit's immediate release. President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) returned to Ramallah on July 8; Consul General met with Abbas on July 9. The successful transit of 68 American citizens from Gaza to Amman on July 8 has encouraged more American citizens to ask for similar assistance. Border crossings remain closed, except for the Nahal Oz fuel transfer station, which is operational as of 1130 on July 9. Significant electrical shortages continue in Gaza City and Rafah due to battle damage.

Military Developments

12. (SBU) IDF forces appear to have withdrawn from parts of northern Gaza on July 8, although there are Israeli press reports that suggest IDF forces moved back into the area around the former Israeli settlement of Dugit early on July 19. IDF presence reportedly continues in the middle and southern sectors of the Gaza Strip. The IAF is reported to have downed the main bridge between Gaza City and Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza, as part of an anti-Qassam rocket launching effort. "Haaretz," quoting IDF sources, predicted that incursions into Gaza would expand in the coming days.

13. (SBU) An explosion in Sajaiyeh, east of Gaza City, on the evening of July 8 that killed a Palestinian mother and two of

her children has received wide-spread media coverage. The IDF denied responsibility for the fatalities.

¶14. (SBU) A Qassam rocket launched from Gaza early on July 9 struck the southern Israeli city of Sderot, wounding an Israeli civilian. A second rocket on July 9 reportedly damaged an Israeli house.

¶15. (SBU) Israeli raids continue in the West Bank, including searches of offices associated with Hamas and arrest campaigns in villages and camps.

Political Developments

¶16. (SBU) Prime Minister Ismael Hanniyyah released a 5-point plan on July 8 (ref (a)) that calls for:

-- All parties to return to calm and stop all military operations;
-- Israel to withdraw its forces from Gaza;
-- All detained Palestinian ministers and PLC members to be released;
-- Border crossings to be opened and the "siege" lifted;
-- Negotiations to be resumed regarding "the IDF soldier who is being held hostage."

¶17. (SBU) The GOI has reportedly rejected the plan; officials in Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's office are quoted in the Israeli press as saying the GOI will not agree to a truce until kidnapped IDF corporal Galid Shalit is released.

¶18. (C) President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) returned to Ramallah on July 8 for the first time since the start of the current crisis on June 25. Consul General met with Abu Mazen on July 9.

¶19. (C) Criticism of Abu Mazen is starting to emerge from Hamas sources, which at this point are a slight departure from the united public front Palestinian factions have sought to maintain. Ref (b) contains Hamas complaints regarding Abu Mazen's calls to cease Qassam rocket firing and release Shalit; Ref (c) notes criticism of the President for overruling PA Interior Minister Said Siyam's order to PA Security Forces to take up arms against the IDF. Hamas websites are also reportedly stepping up their criticism of Abu Mazen.

AMCIT Update

¶10. (C) As of 1900 hours on July 8, 68 Amcits requesting assistance to leave Gaza successfully reached Amman. With Post's assistance, the Amcits left Gaza in the early morning but encountered a delay at the Allenby Bridge. Amcits without Palestinian passports were required to have Israeli exit permits. Once secured, the Amcits crossed smoothly into Jordan. On July 9, ACS officer reported that 5 new Amcit families, Amcits who failed to bring the necessary travel documents on July 8, and other Amcits not approved by the GOI for departure contacted Post requesting additional assistance to leave Gaza.

Humanitarian Update

¶11. (SBU) Crossings: The Karni/al-Mintar and Rafah crossings remain closed. Nahal Oz fuel transfer station is operational.

¶12. (SBU) Fuel: As of 1130 hours on July 9, USAID Gaza-based field staff reported that 200,000 liters of diesel were delivered through Nahal Oz. Gaza gas station owners expect to receive an additional 100,000 liters of diesel, 100,000 liters of gasoline, and 144 tons of cooking gas

through Nahal Oz. These amounts are less than the average daily consumption rates for Gaza.

¶13. (SBU) Electricity: USAID Gaza-based field staff reported that 3 of 10 medium tension feeder lines are damaged in Gaza City, northern Gaza, and Rafah. Twenty-five percent of Gaza City is without electricity. There continues to be no electricity and no water in Rafah since 1100 hours on July 15. A repair crew in Rafah determined that damage to the electrical feeder line is on the Israeli side. The crew is reportedly coordinating with the Israeli Electric Company to fix the damaged line.

WALLES